

## Message Text

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46

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

/056 W

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R 230900Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9975

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 2866

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT MY

SUBJ: MORE SABAH POLITICAL ATMOSPHERICS

REF: A) KL 2707; B) KL 2432

1. EMBASSY HAS LEARNED FROM RELIABLE KOTA KINABALU SOURCE THAT STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS ARE SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 19 AND THAT POLITICKING IS IN FULL SWING IN UNITED SABAH NATIONAL ORGANIZATION (USNO), THE STATE'S RULING PARTY, REGARDING CANDIDACIES AND ALLOCATION OF SEATS AMONG ETHNIC GROUPS. AS NOTED IN OTHER EMBASSY REPORTS, THERE ARE INDICATIONS KADAZANS ALLIED WITH USNO ARE SEEKING LARGER SHARE OF SEATS IN STATE ASSEMBLY WHICH WILL BE ENLARGED TO 48 SEATS FROM PRESENT 36.

2. REGARDING SABAH FOUNDATION, WE HAVE LEARNED THAT  
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DIRECTOR-DESIGNATE, DATU KHALIL BIN DATU JAMALUL, IS

CHIEF MINISTER TUN MUSTAPHA'S NEPHEW AND THAT MUSTAPHA ASKED SENATOR DATUK SYED KECHIK TO STEP ASIDE BECAUSE OF APPARENTLY WIDESPREAD CRITICISM IN THE STATE THAT FOUNDATION IS BEING "MANIPULATED" BY NON-SABAHAN SYED KECHIK. IN " IN "CLARIFICATION" OF KHALIL APPOINTMENT, MUSTAPHA SAID MAY 19 THAT SYED KECHIK WILL CONTINUE AS FOUNDATION CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND KHALIL WILL UNDERSTUDY HIM FOR TIME BEING.

3. OTHER REPORTS REACHING EMBASSY INDICATE THAT SABAH MALAY POLITICAL LEADERS IN PARTICULAR HAVE BEEN INCREASINGLY CRITICAL OF MUSTAPHA'S TIGHT HOLD ON POLITICAL SYSTEM AND ARE JOCKEYING FOR INCREASED INFLUENCE. ALSO, RUMORS PERSIST THAT FEDERAL GOVT LEADERS ARE PRESSING MUSTAPHA ON THREE FRONTS: (1) TO HOLD CLEAN AND OPEN ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS; (2) TO CLEAN UP SABAH FOUNDATION FINANCIAL AFFAIRS AND CHANNEL MORE REVENUES INTO DEPLETED STATE TREASURY; AND (3) TO DISENGAGE FROM ACTIVE SUPPORT OF SOUTHERN PHILIPPINE MUSLIM REBELLION.

3. ON SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES, RELIABLE K.L. SOURCE HAS TOLD US THAT SYED KECHIK HAS MADE A NUMBER OF TRIPS TO MANILA RECENTLY, OSTENSIBLY RELATED TO SOUTHEAST ASIAN LUMBER PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION (SEALPA) AND PRIVATE BUSINESS AFFAIRS, BUT HE MAY ALSO BE ACTING AS INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN MUSTAPHA AND GOP OFFICIALS ON SETTLEMENT OF MUSLIM INSURGENCY. HOWEVER, PHILIPPINE EMBOFF WHO HEARD SIMILAR REPORT COMMENTED PRIVATELY THAT, WHILE SYED KECHIK MAY BE MANEUVERING BEHIND SCENES. SOLUTION TO SOUTHERN PHILIPPINE PROBLEM CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED BY PM RAZAK AND PRES MARCOS, MUSTAPHA NOTWITHSTANDING.

4. COMMENT: IT IS TOO EARLY TO ASSESS SINGIFICANCE OF THIS ACTIVITY AND SPECULATION, BUT IT IS CERTAIN THAT TEMPO OF SABAH POLITICS ON ALL FRONTS WILL CONTINUE TO INCREASE AS STATE ELECTIONS DRAW NEARER. UNDERHILL

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